

THE MEDIA AND NATIONAL SECURITY
ADDRESS
BY
LIEUTENANT GENERAL VERNON A. WALTERS
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
TO
WASHINGTON PROFESSIONAL CHAPTER
SOCIETY OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS
WEDNESDAY, 7 MAY 1975
NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO TALK TO YOU TONIGHT ABOUT A VERY DIFFICULT AND AWKWARD SUBJECT, NAMELY, THE MEDIA AND NATIONAL SECURITY. I SAY DIFFICULT AND AWKWARD BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY WHO BELIEVE THAT THE FULL FUNCTION OF BOTH IS ABSOLUTELY CONTRADICTORY. THERE ARE THOSE IN THE MEDIA WHO BELIEVE THEY HAVE NOT ONLY THE DUTY BUT THE RIGHT TO FIND OUT EVERYTHING AND PRINT IT AND THERE ARE THOSE IN INTELLIGENCE WHO BELIEVE THAT EVERYTHING RELATING TO INTELLIGENCE SHOULD BE KEPT SECRET. SINCE I HOLD NEITHER OF THESE TWO BELIEFS, IT IS PROBABLE THAT WHAT I BELIEVE WILL OFFEND SOME PEOPLE AT BOTH ENDS OF THE SPECTRUM.

THE IDEA THAT EVERYTHING SHOULD BE MADE PUBLIC AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND WITHOUT REGARD FOR ITS CONSEQUENCES ON THE LIFE OF THE NATION WAS CERTAINLY NOT HELD BY GEORGE WASHINGTON. ON 26 JULY 1777 HE WROTE TO COLONEL ELIAS DRAYTON, THEN HIS INTELLIGENCE CHIEF IN NEW JERSEY, AND SAID, "THE NECESSITY OF PROCURING GOOD INTELLIGENCE IS

APPARENT AND NEED NOT BE FURTHER URGED. ALL THAT REMAINS FOR ME TO ADD IS THAT YOU SHOULD KEEP THE WHOLE MATTER AS SECRET AS POSSIBLE. FOR UPON SECRECY SUCCESS DEPENDS IN MOST ENTERPRISES OF THE KIND AND FOR WANT OF IT THEY ARE GENERALLY DEFEATED."

THREE OF GENERAL WASHINGTON'S BEST SPIES WERE SEIZED FOR PROSECUTION BY THE AMERICAN AUTHORITIES IN NEW JERSEY WHO THOUGHT THAT THEY WERE BRITISH AGENTS. WASHINGTON WROTE TO THE GOVERNOR OF NEW JERSEY ASKING FOR THEIR RELEASE SAYING, "UPON THESE CONSIDERATIONS I HOPE YOU WILL PUT A STOP TO THE PROSECUTION, UNLESS OTHER MATTERS APPEAR AGAINST THEM. YOU MUST BE WELL CONVINCED THAT IT IS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY TO MAKE USE OF THESE MEANS TO PROCURE INTELLIGENCE. THE PERSONS EMPLOYED MUST BEAR THE SUSPICION OF BEING THOUGHT INIMICAL AND IT IS NOT IN THEIR POWER TO ASSERT THEIR INNOCENCE

BECAUSE THAT WOULD GET ABROAD AND DESTROY THE CONFIDENCE
THE ENEMY PUTS IN THEM."

JAMES POLK IN 1846 IN PEACETIME SAID, "THE EXPERIENCE
OF EVERY NATION ON EARTH HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT EMERGENCIES
MAY ARISE IN WHICH IT BECOMES ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FOR THE
PUBLIC SAFETY OR THE PUBLIC GOOD TO MAKE EXPENDITURES THE
VERY OBJECT OF WHICH WOULD BE DEFEATED BY PUBLICITY." HE
WENT ON TO SAY, "IN TIME OF WAR OR IMPENDING DANGER THE
SITUATION OF THE COUNTRY MAY MAKE IT NECESSARY TO EMPLOY
INDIVIDUALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING INFORMATION OR
RENDERING OTHER IMPORTANT SERVICES WHO COULD NEVER BE PREVAILED
UPON TO ACT IF THEY ENTERTAINED THE LEAST APPREHENSION THAT
THEIR NAMES OR THEIR AGENCY WOULD IN ANY CONTINGENCY BE
DIVULGED."

HARRY TRUMAN IN OCTOBER 1951 SAID, "WHETHER IT BE TREASON
OR NOT, IT DOES THE U.S. JUST AS MUCH HARM FOR MILITARY SECRETS

TO BE MADE KNOWN TO POTENTIAL ENEMIES THROUGH OPEN PUBLICATION AS IT DOES FOR THE MILITARY SECRETS TO BE GIVEN AN ENEMY THROUGH THE CLANDESTINE OPERATION OF SPIES. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE BEST SOLUTION CAN BE REACHED BY ADOPTING AN APPROACH BASED ON THE THEORY THAT EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO KNOW OUR MILITARY SECRETS AND RELATED INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL SECURITY."

"TO THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY, A NECESSITY TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, FROM ONE WHO KNOWS." H.S.T.

NOW ALL OF THIS IS NOT TO TELL YOU THAT WE ARE ALL ARCHANGELS AND THAT WE SHOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO SCRUTINY. WE SHOULD, BUT PROPERLY DONE IN A WAY SATISFACTORY TO THE PRESIDENT, THE CONGRESS, AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

WE ARE NOW EMBARKED ON A GREAT SERIES OF INVESTIGATIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER ANY NATION CAN RUN ITS INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, SO TO SPEAK, IN MACY'S WINDOW. PERHAPS WE CAN. IF SO, WE WILL BE THE FIRST NATION IN HISTORY TO REACH THIS GOAL THAT HAS ELUDED THE OTHER DEMOCRATIC NATIONS.

WE DO NEED APPROPRIATE SCRUTINY. THE CONGRESS AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE MUST BE CERTAIN THAT ALL OF US UNDERSTAND THAT WE MUST RUN OUR INTELLIGENCE SERVICE IN A WAY AND BY STANDARDS ACCEPTABLE TO THEM. WE ARE PART OF THEM, IF YOU WILL. I AM NOT AN OLD CIA MAN. I CAME THERE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1972, BUT I REJECT THE IDEA THAT THERE IS A CIA MIND JUST AS I REJECT THE IDEA THAT THERE IS A MILITARY MIND IN SOME WAY DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. YES, THERE ARE SOME OVERZEALOUS PEOPLE WHO MAY THINK THAT THEY HAVE SOME SPECIAL MISSION, AND I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT

WE MAY NOT HAVE HAD SOME IN THE PAST. BUT THIS IS NOT JUST TRUE OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY; IT IS TRUE OF ANY LARGE BUREAUCRACY. I AM SURE THAT IF ANY MAJOR ENTITY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT WERE SUBJECTED TO THE KIND OF SCRUTINY TO WHICH WE ARE SUBJECTED, IT WOULD BE FOUND THAT WE ARE NOT THE ONLY GOVERNMENT AGENCY WHICH MAY HAVE GONE TO THE EDGE OR EVEN BEYOND WHAT IS CONSIDERED PROPER AT A GIVEN TIME. WITHOUT CONDONING EVEN ONE IMPROPRIETY, I CAN SAY THAT THESE, AT MOST, WERE OCCASIONAL ABERRATIONS, CERTAINLY NOT THE RULE.

BUT THE PERCEPTION OF OUR PEOPLE OF WHAT IS PROPER CHANGES. ONE COULD RUN A SEGREGATED SCHOOL IN 1952 WITHOUT FALLING AFOUL OF THE LAW. ONE COULD NOT IN 1975, AND IF IN 1922 YOU HAD TRIED, IN SOME PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, TO RUN ANYTHING BUT A SEGREGATED SCHOOL, YOU WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN IN DEEP TROUBLE. WHAT I THINK HAS NOT BEEN PERCEIVED IS THE DEGREE OF CHANGE IN THE INTELLIGENCE BUSINESS ITSELF. PEOPLE ARE NOW WRITING ABOUT WHAT THEY THINK

IT WAS LIKE IN THE 50'S AND 60'S. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE IT DESCRIBED AS IT IS RATHER THAN AS IT WAS. INTELLIGENCE TODAY CERTAINLY RETAINS THE HUMAN SIDE, BUT IT IS ALSO LARGELY A MELD OF TECHNOLOGY AND ANALYSIS. INTELLIGENCE IS PERHAPS THE OLDEST PROFESSION IN THE WORLD--SOMEBODY HAD TO FIND OUT WHERE THE ACTION WAS--BUT AMERICA'S GREAT CONTRIBUTION HAS BEEN IN THE FIELD OF ANALYSIS AND TECHNOLOGY. TODAY WE CAN SIGN AGREEMENTS BECAUSE WE HAVE THE MEANS OF VERIFYING THE OTHER SIDE'S COMPLIANCE WITH THEM.

I THINK WHAT IS OUT OF DATE IS THE KIND OF COVERAGE THE MEDIA GIVES INTELLIGENCE. ANYTHING WITH THE LETTERS CIA IS HANDLED WITH AN EXCITEMENT THAT IT OFTEN DOESN'T DESERVE. INTELLIGENCE TODAY IS FAR MORE THAN MATA HARI OR JAMES BOND. AMERICA'S UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION TO INTELLIGENCE HAS BEEN IN

THE FIELD OF APPLIED INTELLECTUAL ANALYSIS, IN THE FIELD OF MANAGEMENT. THIS DOES NOT MEAN WE'RE PERFECT. WE'VE DONE SOME STUPID THINGS. QUITE FRANKLY, WHO HASN'T. BUT I REALLY DO NOT FEEL THAT THE PROFOUND CHANGES IN INTELLIGENCE IN RECENT YEARS HAVE BEEN REFLECTED IN REPORTING ON US. TODAY WE KNOW KNOWLEDGE IS POWER. ANYTHING WE CAN DO TO SHARE MUCH OF THE INFORMATION WE HAVE WE TRY TO DO.

WE SERVE NOT ONLY THE EXECUTIVE AND THE CONGRESS BUT ALSO THE MEDIA. LAST YEAR MANY MEMBERS OF THE PRESS FOUND IT WORTH THEIR WHILE TO ASK US FOR BRIEFINGS ON A WIDE VARIETY OF SUBJECTS. THERE WERE MANY HUNDREDS OF SUCH CONTACTS.

WE SERVE THE GENERAL PUBLIC BY ROUTINELY MAKING AVAILABLE TO THEM, TO SCHOLARS AND TO NEWSMEN, ECONOMIC RESEARCH AIDS, BIOGRAPHIC REFERENCE WORKS ON FOREIGN LEADERS,

ANALYSES OF RADIO BROADCASTS FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES --
PARTICULARLY THE SOVIET UNION AND CHINA -- AVAILABLE THROUGH
THE DOCUMENT EXPEDITING PROJECT OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
SOME UNCLASSIFIED MONOGRAPHS, SUCH AS A RECENT PAPER EXPLORING
THE IMPLICATIONS OF TRENDS IN WORLD POPULATION GROWTH, FOOD
PRODUCTION, AND CLIMATE, ARE ALSO INCLUDED. FORTY-FOUR
SEPARATE TITLES WERE RELEASED TO THIS PROJECT LAST YEAR.
OTHER OUTLETS, SUCH AS THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE AND
THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL INFORMATION SERVICE, CARRY AGENCY
TRANSLATIONS OF FOREIGN TECHNICAL PUBLICATIONS AND RADIO
BROADCASTS, AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF MAPS AND ATLASES. AN
AGRICULTURAL ATLAS ON THE SOVIET UNION, FOR EXAMPLE, IS THE
MOST RECENT IN A SERIES OF SPECIALIZED ATLASES THAT HAS ALSO
FEATURED WORKS ON CHINA AND THE MIDDLE EAST.

SO WHERE DO WE COME IN THIS QUESTION OF THE MEDIA AND
NATIONAL SECURITY? ALL OF US BELIEVE PROFOUNDLY THAT A FREE PRESS
IS ESSENTIAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY. BUT

EVERYWHERE ELSE IN OUR SOCIETY THERE ARE CHECKS AND BALANCES ON ALL OF OUR FREEDOMS. I AM NOT FREE TO TAKE MY NEIGHBOR'S POSSESSIONS. MY FREEDOM EXTENDS UNTIL IT HARMS THE COMMON GOOD. IN A FREE SOCIETY WE ALL HAVE A SHARE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT THAT FREEDOM SURVIVES.

WE IN INTELLIGENCE DO NOT ASK THAT OUR MISTAKES BE OVERLOOKED, THAT ANYTHING WRONG WE MIGHT DO BE OVERLOOKED. WE ASK ONLY THAT IN ALL MATTERS RELATING TO INTELLIGENCE THAT SOME THOUGHT BE GIVEN TO THE COMMON GOOD.

A FOREIGNER ONCE SAID TO ME THAT AMERICANS WERE AN ADMIRABLE PEOPLE BUT THAT ONE OF THEIR LEAST ATTRACTIVE FACETS WAS A CERTAIN PHARISAICAL STREAK WHICH SAYS, "OH, YES, SPYING MAY BE ALL VERY WELL FOR THE WICKED RUSSIANS, BRITISH, OR FRENCH, BUT WE AMERICANS ARE PURE AND DON'T

NEED THAT SORT OF THING. THEN, WE ARE SOMEWHAT LIKE THE PHARISEE WHO SAID, "LORD, I THANK THEE THAT I AM NOT AS OTHER MEN."

CANNIBAL STORY

WE LIVE IN A WORLD FILLED WITH CONFLICT. IF FREEDOM IS TO LIVE, WE MUST KEEP IT ALIVE. SOME FEEL DÉTENTE HAS BROUGHT THE END OF SUCH DANGERS; OTHERS HOPE IT WILL. I CAN ONLY TELL YOU A STORY SOMEONE TOLD ME RECENTLY AND WHICH MAY NOT BE TOTALLY DEVOID OF A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF TRUTH.

BEAR STORY

TO RETURN TO THE PROBLEM OF INTELLIGENCE AND THE MEDIA, HOW IS THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY TO BE KEPT OPERATING WITHIN THE LIMITS OF WHAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN LEGISLATE VIRTUE. PROHIBITION

PROVED YOU COULD NOT. FIRST, WE MUST HAVE THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS THAT EXPOSES ERROR -- ACCURATELY AND IN A POSITIVE SENSE -- NOT JUST HYSTERICAL HEADLINING OF UNPROVED AND SOMETIMES WILD ACCUSATIONS. PEOPLE WHO WORK IN INTELLIGENCE HAVE RIGHTS TOO. FOR, WHEN THE ATTACK IS MADE, THE REFUTATION OR DENIAL RARELY CATCHES UP WITH IT. THOSE WHO SERVE THE AMERICAN PEOPLE ALSO HAVE A RIGHT TO THE PRESUMPTION OF INNOCENCE WHICH OUR LAWS GUARANTEE.

THE MEDIA MUST BE FREE TO REPORT ANYTHING THEY FIND WRONG WITH INTELLIGENCE, ANYTHING THEY FEEL TRANSGRESSES PROPRIETY, ANYTHING THAT SHOULD BE CORRECTED. BUT NOT MATTERS THAT CAN ACTIVELY HARM THE INTERESTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, SUCH AS NAMES OF PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES AND CAREERS MAY BE ENDANGERED OR DELICATE RELATIONS WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS. WHO IS TO DECIDE?

I DON'T REALLY KNOW. IT IS LIKE VIRTUE. IT CAN'T BE
LEGISLATED. IN GOVERNMENT YOU MUST CHOOSE THE RIGHT PEOPLE
AND FIRE THEM IF THEY ARE UNWORTHY OF TRUST. I DO BELIEVE
WE SHOULD HAVE INTELLIGENCE LEGISLATION THAT WILL PROTECT
THE SECRETS THAT REALLY MATTER, THAT ENDANGER SOMEONE'S LIFE
OR REPUTATION OR THAT MAY ENDANGER THE UNITED STATES, NOT
CHILDISH NONSENSE. WE HAVE LEGISLATION TO PROTECT CENSUS
STATISTICS, CROP FORECASTS, COMMERCIAL INFORMATION, AND ALMOST
NONE FOR OUR NATIONAL OR INTELLIGENCE SECRETS. EVEN NEUTRAL
LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES LIKE SWEDEN OR SWITZERLAND HAVE
EFFECTIVE LEGISLATION IN THIS RESPECT.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT WHEN CONGRESS HAS ESTABLISHED THE
KIND OF OVERSIGHT THAT THEY WILL DEEM SATISFACTORY THAT THEY
WILL ALSO GIVE US APPROPRIATE LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THOSE

MATTERS THAT VITALLY, NOT PERIPHERALLY, AFFECT THE SECURITY OF THE U.S.

THE MEDIA ARE THE EYES AND EARS OF THE NATION. THROUGH THEM OUR PEOPLE PERCEIVE REALITY OF THE WORLD IN WHICH WE LIVE. NO FREE NATION HAS ENDURED WITHOUT A FREE PRESS AND WHEN FREEDOM FALLS, THE MEDIA ARE THE FIRST VICTIMS (SAIGON). I DO NOT BELIEVE WE NEED CENSORSHIP. I BELIEVE WE NEED A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY TO THE WHOLE COMMUNITY.

IN OUR SOCIETY THE MEDIA HAVE ACQUIRED IMMENSE POWER, A POWER UNMATCHED IN ANY OTHER COUNTRY OR IN ANY OTHER TIME. I BELIEVE, MYSELF, THAT WITH THAT POWER COMES RESPONSIBILITY THAT CANNOT BE SHUCKED OFF ON THE GROUNDS THAT EVERYBODY NEEDS TO KNOW EVERYTHING. THIS FREEDOM OR POWER DERIVES FROM THE FREE SOCIETY IN WHICH WE LIVE. IF AMERICAN FREEDOM

IS TO SURVIVE I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT CAN BE DEFENDED
BY THE ARMED FORCES OR THE CIA ALONE. IT MUST BE DEFENDED
BY EVERY AMERICAN, BUTCHER, BAKER, OR REPORTER. ALL
AMERICANS ARE EQUAL BEFORE THE LAW. ALL OF US SHARE THE
BURDEN OF PRESERVING LIBERTY AND JUSTICE. NO ONE IS EXEMPT.
IT IS A BURDEN THAT BOTH INTELLIGENCE AND THE MEDIA MUST
SHARE. IF WE DO NOT BEAR IT RESPONSIBLY, THERE WILL BE NO
FREEDOM FOR ANY OF US.